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Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions

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Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note contains a summary of recommendations addressed by the Economic and Social Council to its functional commissions, in particular the Commission on the Status of Women. It also contains a summary of actions already taken by the Commission on the Status of Women to implement those recommendations, as well as suggested recommendations for further action which the Commission may wish to take, or which it may wish to address to the Council.

* E/CN.6/2000/1.

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Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions

I. Introduction

1. On the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session, the Economic and Social Council approved the Commission's provisional agenda for its forty-fifth session, which included agenda item 5 entitled "Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions". The President of the Council, in a letter dated 4 October 2000 addressed to the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, drew to the Chairperson's attention the outcome of the substantive session of 2000 requiring specific follow-up by the Commission on the Status of Women. Attention was also drawn to policy recommendations contained in the list of resolutions, agreed conclusions and decisions adopted by the Council specifically addressed to the functional commissions. The President invited the Chairperson to bring the policy recommendations to the attention of the Commission and take necessary action to implement them. The present note has been prepared to facilitate the Commission's deliberations under item 5.

II. Background

2. Since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions 50/227 of 24 May 1996 and 52/12 B of 19 December 1997 (item 8 on the agenda of the Economic and Social Council), the Council has continued the implementation of these resolutions to strengthen its coordination and oversight roles vis-à-vis its subsidiary bodies. Under this item, the Council has adopted resolutions on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields and on cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. The Council has also continued its efforts concerning integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (item 4 on the Council's agenda). Under both items, the Council has addressed specific guidance to its functional commissions.

3. In 1999, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/51, the Council welcomed joint bureau meetings of its bureau with the chairpersons of the functional commissions; invited the bureaux of the functional commissions to develop their interaction with a view to improving collaboration and coordination on issues that are addressed by two or more functional commissions; and encouraged further strengthening and intensification of collaboration among and between the secretariats of the functional commissions; such collaboration can be in the form of, inter alia, preparing joint reports on linked issues, systematic exchange of relevant information and documentation and participation in relevant activities, where feasible and appropriate.

4. In Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/55, the Council also urged its functional commissions and other relevant bodies of the United Nations system to enhance coordination and complementarity among the five-year reviews and, to that effect, encouraged the bureaux of the preparatory committees for the five-year reviews of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the World Summit for

Social Development to consult with one another to avoid duplication and ensure cross-fertilization of ideas.

III. Substantive session of 2000

5. During its substantive session of 2000, the Council adopted a number of resolutions, agreed conclusions and decisions, including agreed conclusions 2000/2 on assessment of the progress made within the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

6. In 2000, for the first time, the Economic and Social Council undertook a comprehensive assessment of conference review processes. The Council emphasized the importance of the five-year reviews and appraisals to reaffirm the goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits. The Council recognized that the review processes provided the occasion to reaffirm the goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, identify obstacles and constraints encountered, actions and initiatives to overcome them and important measures for the further implementation of programmes of action as well as new challenges and emerging issues.

7. In its agreed conclusions 2000/2, the Economic and Social Council pledged, with the support of its functional commissions, to continue to promote a better coordination among the functional commissions. In addition to increasing synergy with and among the functional commissions, the Council reiterated its commitment to support the General Assembly by providing recommendations on its policies for an effective, efficient and coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

8. The Council called upon its regional and functional commissions to enhance reviews, assess their capacity to conduct follow-up of conference implementation, pay attention to the preparatory process, note the importance of regional and national preparations and identify the provisional agenda and scope of the review of conferences. The Council pointed out the importance of functional commissions working with the specialized agencies and international financial institutions in the early stage of the review process, and building partnerships with and networks among Governments, international organizations, civil society and private sector organizations in pursuit of conference goals.

9. The Economic and Social Council reaffirmed its commitment to promote a coordinated and integrated follow-up to the implementation of major United Nations conferences and summits, including their five-year reviews, building on the guidance contained in its agreed conclusions 1995/1 and its subsequent resolutions on the coordinated and integrated follow-up to conferences. The Council also reiterated its commitment to support the General Assembly by making recommendations to it on policies for effective, efficient and coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

10. The Economic and Social Council also adopted resolution 2000/26 on the role of employment and work in poverty eradication: empowerment and advancement of women and 2000/27 on basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated

implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits at all levels. Noting with concern the persistent problems in addressing the challenges of poverty eradication, gender inequalities, empowerment and advancement of women and employment, in its resolution 2000/26, the Council reaffirmed the need for the international community to urgently address the challenges of poverty eradication and employment creation in a holistic approach, particularly within the context of their efforts to achieve the empowerment and advancement of women. In its resolution 2000/27, the Council called upon the functional commissions to keep under review the full range of indicators used in their reports and information networks with full participation and ownership of Member States, with a view to avoiding duplication, as well as ensuring transparency, consistency and reliability of these indicators.

IV. Follow-up action by the Commission on the Status of Women to resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council

11. The Commission on the Status of Women has, in previous years, complied with General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B and all other relevant Economic and Social Council resolutions. Furthermore, the Commission now includes a regular item on its agenda on follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions. The Commission devotes adequate time to this item at its sessions. In 1997 the Chair of the Commission provided extensive comments on the Council's agreed conclusions on poverty eradication (E/1997/27, para. 178). A report (E/CN.6/2000/5) was submitted to the Commission at its forty-fourth session summarizing the recommendations addressed to the functional commissions by the Council in its resolutions 1999/51 and 1999/55 and indicating action already taken by the Commission, as well as putting forward recommendations for further action that should be taken by the Commission.

12. In the table below, the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council addressed to all functional commissions or directly to the Commission on the Status of Women can be found in the left column. Actions already taken by the Commission or expected to be taken at its forty-fifth session as part of its multi-year programme of work are reflected in the right column. As appropriate, the summary is followed by recommendations for possible further action by the Commission or that the Commission may wish to consider addressing to the Council.

Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment, Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy[a]

Ministerial declaration	*Action taken by the Commission recommendation for further action*
Paragraph 5: ... "urgent and concerted actions at the national, regional and international levels are imperative for bridging the digital divide and building digital opportunities and putting information and communication technologies firmly in the service of development for all".	Taking note of the fact that many women worldwide are yet to effectively use the new information and communication technologies for networking, advocacy, exchange of information, business, education, media consultation and e-commerce initiatives, the Commission on the Status of Women may wish to look at the gender dimension of the digital divide, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in its multi-year programme of work. The Commission may also wish to involve the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) in looking at the issue of women's access to new information technologies, particularly with regard to the development of the Gender Awareness Internet Networking System (GAINS).

[a] A/55/3, chap. III, para. 17.

Agreed conclusions 2000/2, Assessment of the progress made within the United Nations system, through conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Agreed conclusions 2000/2	*Action taken by the Commission recommendation for further action*
Paragraph 8: "The Council invites its relevant functional commissions to consider these" [a number of options], inter alia, those listed in paragraph 33 of the report of the Secretary-General[a] ... "and other possible options for enhancing the reviews of the major United Nations conferences and summits and to inform the Council for its consideration at its substantive session in 2001 of the outcome of their discussion. Particular attention should be given to the periodicity of the conference reviews".	The Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women had previously addressed the issue of the periodicity of the conference reviews at one of its meetings. At that meeting, the Bureau acknowledged the importance of the 10-year review, in order to keep the momentum going, but did not favour a negotiation process. The periodicity and the review process of conferences and summits could be further discussed during the Commission's forty-fifth session in March 2001. The Commission may wish to consider options as listed in paragraph 33 of the report of the Secretary-General (E/2000/57) and other possible options for enhancing the reviews and report the outcome of the discussion to the Council.

Agreed conclusions 2000/2	*Action taken by the Commission/recommendation for further action*
Paragraph 9: "The Council reiterates that the relevant functional commissions ... should focus on the issues relating to the conference for which they are responsible, and obtain inputs from relevant bodies on related issues".	In 1998, the Commission on the Status of Women took up four of the critical areas of concern from the Beijing Platform for Action in accordance with its five-year work programme. The critical areas focused primarily on the human rights of women, in particular violence against women, women and armed conflict, human rights of women and the girl child. Agreed conclusions were adopted on each identifying obstacle and proposed action(s) to accelerate implementation of the Platform at national, regional and international levels. In order to facilitate a coordinated approach to a particular theme or issue, following the Commission's consideration of the Council's agreed conclusions 1996/1 on poverty eradication, the Commission, referring to paragraph 45 of the Council's agreed conclusions 1996/1, called on the Commission on Human Rights to consider providing input to the Commission on the Status of Women on ensuring women's real enjoyment of their human rights, in particular those relating to alleviation of women's poverty, economic development and economic resources. With a view to facilitating interaction between the two Commissions, the Secretariat was invited to submit a report on this subject to both Commissions. The requested report was subsequently prepared jointly by the two offices and submitted to both Commissions (E/CN.6/1998/11-E/CN.4/1998/22). In 1999, at its forty-third session, the Commission on the Status of Women submitted draft resolutions on the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, Palestinian women, the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002-2005, and the endorsement of the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on women and health and institutional mechanisms. With regard to the forty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2000, according to the five-year programme of work decided in 1996 (follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, draft resolution II), the work of the Commission focused on a "Comprehensive quinquennial review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action" and "Emerging Issues". The three-week session in 2000 was mainly devoted to the above issues by the Commission acting as the preparatory body of the special session of the General Assembly to review progress in implementing the Platform for Action.

Agreed conclusions 2000.2	*Action taken by the Commission recommendation for further action*
Paragraph 11: ... "calls upon the Commissions to identify the possible agenda and scope of the review of the conference for which they have primary responsibility".	At its forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/142, 17 December 1999, the preparatory committee of the special session submitted for approval a draft provisional agenda which would have the special session review and appraise progress made in implementing the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action and identify further actions and initiatives for overcoming obstacles to its implementation. The Commission also submitted a draft decision entitled "Organizational arrangements for the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly" (both contained in E/CN.6/2000/PC/L.6).
Paragraph 14: ... "In preparing the reviews, the functional and regional commissions of the United Nations system are invited to organize technical meetings".	Many expert group meetings and seminars were organized by Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations on aspects of the 12 critical areas, as part of preparation for the special session. These included an expert group meeting to identify emerging issues, trends and new approaches. An international workshop entitled "Beijing +5: Future actions and initiatives" was convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women and hosted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut, from 8 to 10 November 1999. Preparatory meetings were also held in each of the five regional commissions in response to General Assembly resolution 54/142, which encouraged all regional commissions to carry out activities in support of the preparatory process to ensure a regional perspective on implementation and on further actions and initiatives. These meetings assessed the extent of regional implementation and drew up regional and national plans in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva and Lima (E/CN.6/2000/PC/6, Add.1-5).

[a] See E/2000/57.

2000/26, The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: empowerment and advancement of women

Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/26	*Action taken by the Commission recommendation for further action*
Paragraph 3: "Reiterates the call that the relevant organizations of the United Nations system and the international community take consistent, coherent, coordinated and joint action in support of national efforts to eradicate poverty, with particular attention to employment creation and work and the empowerment and advancement of women".	Taking note of the negative impact of globalization, trade liberalization, structural adjustment programmes, external debt and debt servicing problems of developing countries, the Commission may wish to work in conjunction with the Commission on Social Development to look at ways to address the issue of the challenges of poverty eradication and employment creation in their respective programmes of work. The Commission on the Status of Women may also wish to take an active role in the preparatory process of the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into the event, including in topics to be discussed.

2000/27, Basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits at all levels

Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/27	*Action taken by the Commission recommendation for further action*
Paragraph 6: "Calls upon United Nations funds and programmes, functional and regional commissions and specialized agencies to keep under review the full range of indicators used in their reports and information networks with full participation and ownership of Member States, with a view to avoiding duplication, as well as ensuring transparency, consistency and reliability of these indicators".	In the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in June 2000 (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), short- and long-term time-bound targets or measurable goals, including quotas in the promotion of progress towards gender balance in all areas and at all levels of public life, were identified and existing targets reaffirmed in the Beijing Platform for Action were reaffirmed by the Assembly. The United Nations system was called on to support Governments in their efforts to institute action-oriented programmes and measures to accelerate the full implementation of the Platform for Action, with time-bound targets and/or measurable goals and evaluation methods, including gender impact assessments, with full participation of women for measuring and analysing progress. The Commission on the Status of Women is therefore committed to keeping under review the full range of indicators used in their reports and information. The Commission may also wish to reflect the issue of indicators, targets and monitoring mechanisms in its multi-year work programme for the years 2002-2005.